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RESPONSIBILITIES - - - - OF PUBLIC LIFE

A LECTURE DELIVERED
BY MR. G. K. GOKHALE
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RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUBLIC LIFE

GENTLEMEN,

I have undertaken to speak to you on the needs and responsibilities of public life. I do not wish to begin my discourse by any attempt to present to you a scientific idea as to what is meant by public life and, at the same time, it is desirable to have a fairly general and clear idea as to what is meant by the expression "Public Life." We all know that a certain part of our life may be regarded as purely personal life, and beyond that there is another part which may be called the family life ; and beyond these two, there is a third part which we may well describe as our public life. Now, our personal life and family life are easily understood by every one of us ; but public life is not so easily understood, and, therefore, I will say a few words more on this public life before I take up the rest of my argument. It requires two conditions to be fulfilled before any life can be described as public life. In the first place, it must befor the benefit of the public. That is comparatively simple. But there is another condition that must also be fulfilled, and that is, it must be a life shared and participated in, if not by the entire public, at any rate by a very large number of people. For instance, a man who builds a tank or endows a city with a hospital or confers some other favour upon his fellow-being is a public benefactor, he does good to the people. What he does is for the

public benefit, but that is not a question of public life. What he does is not for personal profit, but is intended for the good of the community. His action does not, however, form a part of the public life of that community. These two conditions, therefore, have to be fulfilled before any sphere of life can be described as public life, namely, that the object of public life must be public benefit, and that life must be shared in by a large number of people, if not by the entire public. Now, gentlemen, there is one thing about this public life that I should like to say before I proceed to a comparison of this public life of ours with what is elsewhere. As we advance from a personal form of government to a more democratic form of government, the public life of India assumes more and more importance. At the present moment, I think it is safe to say that the strength and character of India is largely determined by the strength and character of the public life of India. We may well accept this as a test, and if you want to find out where we stand as regards our character and capacity as a community, I think we should be justified in finding out where we stand in regard to public life. In regard to personal and family life, there is not that disproportion between us and the Western people. If we want to make a fair comparison between the two in personal life, while there are certain advantages which Western people may claim, there are certain other advantages which our people may claim. On the whole, it would be difficult to say on whose side the balance of advantage lies. Even as regards family life, while there are great blots in our social system which every true well-wisher of the country must deplore, still there are things in our social system and family life to justify us in saying that a comparison

between our life and that of the other people will not be wholly unfavourable to us.

But when you come to the question of public life, we have to admit and admit at once that we are very far behind the people of the West in that respect, that we have been in the past almost altogether deficient in public life, and that a beginning has now been made and we are fairly progressing, but still as life stands to-day, we are behind the people of the West in that particular respect. If you turn to the achievements of the people on the West in public life, you will have to roughly consider them in three spheres. There is first of all what may be called the sphere of national public life, secondly, the sphere of what may be called political public life, and thirdly and lastly, there is the sphere of what may be called social and humanitarian public life. Now as regards the first, the national public life, the question implies your relations with other countries, whether you have to act as a nation in conjunction with, or in competition with, or in conflict with other countries. Now the achievements of Western people in this connection are well-known, and so far as we are concerned, we were not able to show much in this respect in the past. We are certainly not able to show anything at the present moment. We have hardly anything like national public life in this country, but it will come, and I fondly and most earnestly look forward for the time when the day will come, when we shall play a worthy part in the national public life, the same as other people do (cheers). But for the present, we must all admit that there is no scope for us in this direction, that there is no national public life for us as such. I will, therefore, put aside that sphere as much and turn to the remaining two, viz., political public

life and social and humanitarian public life. The political life of the people concerns itself mainly with the relations between the Government and the people, the relations between those who exercise authority, and those who have to submit to that authority.

Analysing further you find that in most of the Western countries this public life has taken the form first of securing liberties, political liberties that they are bound to enjoy at any particular moment; secondly of widening the bonds of freedom, of acquiring more political liberties, and thirdly, of discharging efficiently those responsibilities which always come with political liberties. You will find that the achievements of the Western nations in this sphere have been very high, and it is desirable that our people should study what the Western people have done in this sphere before they can hope to emulate or excel them in that sphere. In regard to the third sphere, the social and humanitarian sphere, we have first of all to consider what are the standards of social justice accepted by the people whose case we are considering, and when we come to consider the humanitarian sphere, we have got to analyse what the relations of the different classes of the community are to one another and how far those who are better placed understand and try to perform their duty to those who are less favourably circumstanced than themselves. These are the different spheres, and of these, as I have already mentioned to you, I propose to deal with the second and the third spheres so far as India is concerned. The achievements of the people of the West both in the second and the third sphere have been altogether remarkable. The humanitarian movement of the eighteenth century in the West has done more for the

people of the West in some respects than even their struggle for their political freedom. If we understand correctly the value of the dignity of man as man, if we understand the value of the social freedom, if we understand the injustices and the disabilities placed upon any section on the score of birth or sex, if we understand all these things correctly, if we are fired by that enthusiasm which always comes from a keen sense of injustice, if we put our shoulders to the wheel and try to set these matters right, then I say we shall have done something in the social and humanitarian sphere. A beginning has been made and there is an awakening in this land such as there never was. We are, at any rate, ashamed of many of the social injustices which we deplore on all sides of us; only we do not take up with energy, necessary energy, the work to remove those injustices.

But my object to-day is not so much to speak even of this third sphere, namely, social and humanitarian public life, as to speak of the second sphere, namely, the political public life of our people. I use the expression "political public life" in its largest and widest sense. Gentlemen, this political public life of ours must be understood both in connection with our past and also with the work that lies before us in the future. No hasty judgment on the condition of our public life would be of much value. I know there are people who are inclined to throw up things in despair and say there is not hope for the people who are behind, as our people sometimes are behind. There are other people who seem to imagine that because a new awakening has shown itself, the whole problem that we have to deal with will be solved almost in no time, and that, as they have awakened themselves to a new responsibility,

everything would be all right. I want you to realise that our public life, its responsibilities and disabilities and the work that lies before it, aud all that is connected with our public life, must be understood only in relation to our past and in relation to our future. I mention this point, I insist upon it, and emphasise that point, because this public life is, comparatively speaking, a plant of new growth in this land and you must not, therefore, expect a very tender plant to have that strength which you find in more sturdy growths. To those that are inclined to be impatient, I would say, have a little more patience, because while a beginning has been made that does not mean that the end has been reached, and the end may be a long way off. There is a good deal of time to be spent, though in the end we may come up to the standard which we all appreciate so much in other lands. To those, at the same time, who are inclined to be easily self-satisfied, who think that they have occasionally to deliver a speech on public questions or occasionally to take a little interest in public matters and that the whole of their responsibility is then ended, I would say: "Think of the future that lies before you; think of the vast space that has to be covered before you can hold your heads up among the civilised peeple of the world; think of the vast amount of work that lies before you before you can really claim to be human-beings possessed of any self-respect. Do this and then you will see there is not that room for easy self-congratulation which some of us see in the existing state of things." Having made these two preliminary observations, I will now deal with our public life as it is. While I deprecate undue pessimism, at the same time, you must understand where we actually stand, understand our defects and

deficiencies and also understand what our defects really are, because unless we understand these things, these defects will not be set right. This public life, as I have already pointed out, is a tender plant of new growth; but that does not mean that it does not receive at our hands that sustenance which it requires or that sustenance which it is our duty to give to it. You may consider our public life in various fields, from councils of the country down to the village unions, in the municipal councils and local bodies, in the press and the platform, and in the various movements which we have inaugurated for the education of public opinion. In all these fields, we may examine what exactly we are doing in public life, what is the strength and what is the weakness of that public life.

When you come to consider these matters, the first thing that strikes you is that our public life is weak, because our public spirit is weak. The two things are closely bound up together. Our public life is, on the whole, not strong, because our public spirit is not what it is in other countries. What is meant by public spirit? There are certain root ideas that underlie the expression "public spirit." The first idea is that man alone can claim to be animated by public spirit who is prepared to sacrifice personal gain personal comfort, and personal convenience, for the common good (cheers). This, I think, is a most elementary proposition to lay down. Public Spirit, I repeat, requires that you should subordinate considerations of personal gain, personal convenience and personal comfort to the good of the community which you want to serve. But this is not sufficient by itself, though that is all important. There is another consideration which

has come to be indispensable there. That is we should be prepared to subordinate our own personal judgment in the consideration of public matters to what is necessary for the common good. I have found in my twenty-five years' experience of public life that, while men are willing to sacrifice money and thus forego personal gain and while they are willing to take trouble and give up personal comfort and personal convenience, they find that the sacrifice of personal judgment is a much more difficult thing to do (cheers). Our main difficulty in public life springs as much from reluctance or, I would put it in stronger terms, from a constitutional incapacity of our people to subordinate personal judgment to the common good. Our main difficulty springs as much from this as from our indolence, sloth, selfishness or unwillingness to part with money and so forth. Gentlemen, these two considerations are involved in the true conception of public spirit. You must be prepared—I may repeat it for the third time—to sacrifice personal comfort, personal convenience, and personal gain for the common good. More than that, we must be prepared to set aside our own judgment as to what should be done if it is necessary in the public interests that it should be done. We must distinguish between matters of conscience and matters of judgment. In matters of conscience, a man is justified, not only justified, but is bound, to stand up as one against the whole world if necessary. But in matters of judgment there is no such responsibility. In matters of judgment, it is often based upon experience, and the views of the leaders should, as a rule, prevail. Unless we are prepared to subordinate our judgment, common action becomes impossible, and unless there is common action, effective action is impossible. In public life, there

can be no public spirit unless we learn to subordinate our judgment to the judgment of those above us, of leaders of public movements, who are entrusted with the responsibility of leading us. These two considerations involved in genuine public spirit are not having a sufficiently strong hold upon us. Remember that the question of co-operation and discipline which is bound up with the success of every public movement is bound up also with this question of public spirit. Unless there is due submission on the part of the followers to the views of those, who for the moment happen to be leaders, unless we are willing to make the self-sacrifice necessary for the success of a movement, we cannot expect any great results to accrue from any movement. Moreover, remember that the instinct of our people for co-operating with one another and for discipline has not always shown itself in the past. If we want to render a better account of our public life, this weakness of ours will have to be overcome. We shall have to co-operate with one another better, we have to recognise the value of discipline better, than we have been in the habit of doing in the past. That is not my own experience, but it is the experience of all. It is the case of everybody trying to pull on each side. When you are trying to pull a huge stone uphill, you will find some man pushing it sideways and another man kicking it down, so that you find that there are different people giving it a different impetus. It is the same with public life. Taking the municipalities and the councils where there is some show of co-operation, if you will look a little beneath the surface, you will find that different men are pulling in different ways. That is because the conception of public good is not the dominating idea of their work (cheers). Gentlemen, I am pointing out these

difficulties to you not because I undervalue the work that is being done amidst great difficulties, but because I am anxious that better work than what is now being done should be done, and it is in the hands of younger men to show that better work than what is being done at present will be done. In our public life, there are not only these inherent difficulties which may roughly be summed up in the expression "defect of character and capacity," but there are certain outside difficulties which are truly of a formidable character; and it is in connection with these difficulties our public workers have specially to realise their responsibility, so that they may be able to give the best that is in them, in these difficult circumstances, to their country.

Gentlemen, it is not necessary for me to dwell on the exceptional situation of this country. In the inscrutable dispensation of the Providence, two races with divergent and different civilisations, with different traditions and with different temperaments and attitudes of mind have come together, and howsoever they may have come together, we have to recognise the fact that they have to get on together. All this imposes a great and special responsibility on either side. I would, therefore, point out to you that our difficulties do not end there. Even taking our own people into consideration, the diverse creeds and races, of which our population is composed, these diverse creeds and races constitute no small difficulty in our way. We have to take note of the fact that those who are entrusted with authority in this country are of foreign origin. Their main interests are in their country, but we have at the same time to remember that the population of this country is not homogeneous, that it is torn by divisions and dissensions which are all the more acute, because

they sometimes arise from considerations of race and creed, and no public worker and no man who is anxious to take part in public life in this country will be justified in putting out of mind either the one or the other of these two considerations. I lay this proposition down as a safe proposition to make in the present state of things. What may happen in the future, of course, is not given to man to prophesy. But in the present state of this country, no true progress can be achieved unless these three sides that I have spoken join together. Our population may be divided into Hindus and Muhammadans, and for the moment the other communities may be left out of account. Unless these three sides join hands, no real advance can be made. Our progress, therefore, in this country depends upon the harmonious co-operation, first, between the rulers and the ruled, secondly, between the two communities of which the ruled are composed. I do not think that any one of us will stand up and contest the correctness of this proposition. Now, it is easy to lay down a proposition like this. It is easy to say that all sides should co-operate, and that they should be in harmony, and there would be no progress unless there is harmony. But the question is how to secure this co-operation and harmony. As long as self-interest is the dominating factor in the affairs of men, and as long as people will be guided not only by what is just and fair but by psasions and prejudices, so long the difficulties will arise in securing the co-operation which is very necessary for the progress of this country. There are certain broad considerations which may be suggested to you all, so that each one of us in his own sphere may try to facilitate this work of co-operation and may try to work in practice for a common purpose, and when we

work for the common purpose that we have in view, then we shall have the strength which is necessary to overcome these expanding difficulties that lie in our path.

As regards our rulers, I would like to say one word to them from this platform. I would like to say to them that, if, on any account, or, for any reason or by any means, they allow a suspicion to be created in the public mind of this country, as regards the character and intentions of their rule, then no amount of loyalty, no amount of spirit of co-operation on the part of the people will help them long. If the rulers will not see to it, if the members of the ruling race, non-nofficial as well as official, will not clearly realise that it will not do for this vast population to entertain a distrust as to the real character and the ultimate purpose of the British rule in this land; if they do no clearly realise that, then I say to them that they have failed signally in a most responsible situation. But as long as they do that, as long as they do not lower the flag which has been raised in the past by some of their most eminent men that this rule exists for the welfare of the people of India, that the object of this rule is gradually to raise the people to a position of equality with those who are now in a position of authority, so long as this purpose is kept steadily in view, so long as this flag is not allowed to be lowered by selfish considerations, so long will the ruling race be performing its part on the whole fairly and well.

On the other hand, speaking to our own countrymen, I say this. We are bound by obligation; one obligation involves another. It is a reciprocal obligation. The rulers must accept the obligation of which I have spoken. On the other hand, our own people,

sepecially the educated classes, must accept a corresponding obligation ; that is to give no room by word or deed for any questioning of our loyal acceptance of this rule (cheers). If we allow any ground for any distrust or any suspicion in the minds of our rulers like that, then the whole plant, the whole tree of confidence, is torn up by the roots at once. They are a very few men in this country and their minds can easily grow anxious, and if their minds grow anxious, they are armed with such powers that they can use them not only to prevent what is wrong but also to prevent sometimes what is not wrong (laughter). That is only natural. In the same place, we should make worse mistakes. I am only stating the situation as it is and we have to realise it. Therefore, it is a great, solemn and supreme responsibility that rests on our leaders, leaders of public opinion in this land, not to give the slightest or the smallest room for suspicion to be engendered in the mind of the ruling race about our loyal acceptance of this rule. Having done that, the whole requirement of the situation is roughly satisfied on our part. We owe a duty not only to the rulers who have established order and unfurled this high flag, but also to our own country. In a sense the rulers will have no cause to complain, if there is perfect tranquillity and perfect quiet in the land, and if there is no stir or any breath of the sea of public life ; if we accepted our lot as it is, said not a a word, but went on paying our taxes and doing our ordinary work and said nothing about our rights. I do not think that the ruling authorities will complain (laughter). But that does not mean that we shall be doing our duty to our country. We must not allow any suspicion to cross their mind as to our loyal acceptance of this rule. This rule which we have accepted is

indispensable for our own progress and any disturbance of it means really throwing everything into the melting pot. Having taken care not to give room for that kind of suspicion, we have to see to it that we do our duty by our own country. That is to say that we have to build up the strength of our people, so that they may be able to discharge all the responsibility which may ultimately devolve upon them. In our own public life, roughly speaking, we have to do three things. We have to build up the strength of our own people in public life, teach them the habits of co-operation and habits of discipline and spread among them the ideas of our rights; and then we have to bring this strength to bear upon the Government, so that the bonds of freedom in this country may be widened, so that concessions might be followed by other concessions till at last we are able to hold our heads high like other people in other lands. We have to bring to bear strength upon the Government so that they may move with the time. We have to see that such responsibility as has been given to us or as may be given to us is properly and efficiently discharged by us. Take the case of local bodies which are the real nurseries of local Self-Government. If we do our work properly and well in municipalities and local boards, it will not be possible for those who are for progress to say, "we have given you the chance, but what are you doing with it"? We resent this argument when it is used, but we have to admit that there is a great deal of force in the argument. We are not by any means satisfied with all the requirements of public life in the local bodies, and what is happening there may also happen in other fields and in other directions, if further responsibilities are conferred upon us. We have, therefore, got to see to it that

such responsibilities as are conferred upon us are properly and efficiently discharged by us. This is the threefold work that lies before us in our public life. To sum up again, we have to build up the strength of our own people. How is it to be built up? You cannot build up the strength of our people in a short time. It is bound to be a slow work. But it should be a steady and strenuous work. Every one of us must now devote ourselves to this work altogether. I will deal with this part of the subject towards the close of my address. We must go about among the people, point out to them how other people are governed, point out also the advantages of their having a larger voice in the administration of their own affairs, impress upon them the responsibility which such Self-Government involves, and try to prepare them by the spread of education in the true sense among the people—try to prepare them for this responsibility that we may expect good of them in the future. So far as the Government is concerned, you must remember that it is a British Home Government and it is accountable to the British democracy. That fact should inspire us with hope and also give us clearly the idea that many of us have not of the slow manner in which this Government is bound to move. In England, every reform has been very slowly achieved. The Government does not care to move on until it realises that movement is absolutely necessary. The Englishman is here six thousand miles away from his land, but he has brought with him his instincts and traditions. Unless the Government sees clearly there is, beyond the shadow of doubt, eivdence absolutely that a further step in progess is necessary, you cannot expect the Government to move of its own accord. The mistake that many of our people make is this:

that by newspaper articles or speeches on platforms, Government would be brought to their view. Government is not moved by this. They are ready, they are anxious, to understand the value of the suggestions. Unless you fully satisfy them, you cannot reasonably expect Government to move. The Government is to work under British democracy, and anybody who knows anything about British democracy will understand that it is largely swayed by the considerations of humanity and justice. Anybody who understands that will see that, if we are only patient and persistent, this Government will ultimately be bound to accept the justice of the claims, provided they are just. We have therefore first of all to build up the strength of the people in public life and bring that strength to bear upon the Government. The people of this country must govern for themselves one day, that is the law under Providence. I may say a few words on this towards the close of my address. I am not speaking of the near future, gradual progress will lead to that goal, no matter how distant it be. We are not intended by Providence to always remain as a subject-race—that is by no means possible. If we believe in Divine justice, such an arrangement can never be attributed to the Creator. We may assume that our destiny will be the same in spirit as it has fallen to the lot of other countries, a position of self-respect and dignity and that a position of honour among the nations of the world is also in store for the people of India (cheers.) What then is this position? The movement of the world in the East and West is towards representative Government on a democratic basis. I hope you will realise clearly the meaning of that. The days of personal rule even in the East are over; the days of

personal rule in the West have long been over. The East and the West have come to stand so far as that matter is concerned on the same platform. We have to take advantage of this lesson, and we have to shape our course accordingly. The goal that we should keep in view, therefore, is representative Government on a democratic basis. No longer Government for a class, whether it is for a class of Europeans and Indians, no longer Government for a class or section of community, such as Muhammadans as against Hindus, or Hindus as against Muhammadans, is possible. Government by representatives of all, and Government in the interests of the whole community, that is the goal that has to be kept in view. Progress towards this goal has got to be made under British Rule. That is the other consideration that must constantly be kept in view. How is this to be achieved? It is to be achieved in this way. The rulers have promised us of their own accord absolute equality with all the races in this land. We must put forth our best efforts zealously to secure that equality—equality not only among Indians but equality as between Indians and Englishmen in this country. That equality is not to be confined to cases that come before Law Courts, but equality in regard to everything including the form of Government which the English have got for themselves elsewhere. (Cheers.) That, then, is the goal. Approach towards that goal is to be long. The realisation in practice of equality which has been promised to us in theory by our rulers (laughter), this realisation will only come slowly. You must remember that a great deal depends on yourselves. If we are not their equals to-day, it is because our average is much lower than their average, and there cannot be any equality so long as the

averages differ. We should never lose sight of that fact. It wanted you to try and build up a higher average in this country and build up that strength which is necessary before we can claim our equality with the rest of human beings, which shall be ours if we are only true to ourselves. There is nothing impossible under British Rule. If we only constantly keep in view these considerations in practical affairs, we shall endeavour to secure equality not only with the Englishmen in this country but also in regard to the form of Government which they have established for themselves everywhere else. This, then, is the direction in which we have to move. Our whole public work must be directed towards this end, towards the building up of our strength, which can only come from a steady and persistent discharge of our public duties. Every man who has to work in the Municipality as it is and every man who does his work unselfishly contributes to the strength of the people ; every man who tries to impress our rulers with a sense of fairness and justice of our claims and of the sense of our capacity to manage our affairs contributes to the strength of the people. We have to build up this strength in a variety of ways and we have to bring this strength to bear upon the rulers, and then further progress is a comparatively simple affair.

There is one other consideration which the situation suggests and which I must mention to you, and that is in this respect. Our attitude towards the rulers is fairly clear because, even if we were not so minded, our rulers are armed with authority which can compel our attention to duties in regard to them. (Laughter.) The position is not quite so clear as regards the divisons among ourselves and the temptation when you are hit

back, the temptation to magnify small differences, the temptation to indulge in quarrels and conflicts, which are at best be avoided. That temptation is almost inevitable with the bulk of our people. It is no use mincing matters. The Hindu-Muhammadan question at present is the most anxious one, not so much on this side because the Muhammadan community is a small one, but in certain Provinces where they are in a numerical majority. This problem is one of acute gravity, and it is the merest commonplace to say that unless we go on well with one another, Hindus and Muhammadans, there is really no progress possible for either of us. I do not want to apportion the blame. I have never done and I will not do it on this occasion. It always takes two to make a quarrel. This is a safe proposition. (Laughter.) I say this further that those who put forward exaggerated claims for themselves as also those who resist just claims coming from the other side equally make matters difficult for both sides. There is a great deal of this at the present moment, and what we require now is that a few men on either side who are willing to undertake the work should see that the small differences that separate us are kept merely small and that a constant endeavour is made to compose them and to see that the common points which bind us together are constantly and steadily kept in view. There is a matter of very great importance at the present moment. There are sectional organisations being formed everywhere. The temptation to form a sectional organisation is very strong. I went a few days ago to Allahabad, and I found the whole air there astir with this race feeling. What rights and what political concessions that we should get from the people and how we were governed, all these were minor matters to be brushed

aside. The thing that embittered the people most is the feeling that those people have got more seats than they should get and that these people are asking for more than they should get. On the one side the feeling was that these people resist what we ask; we were at one time rulers of the land and we should get more than these other people. Questions like that embittered the relations, social and personal, to such an extent that many thoughtful men are filled with grave apprehensions as to the future of the relations between the two communities. As to the public worker, he owes a responsibility not only to the present but to the future. These men who take sides in these quarrels contribute their share to embitterment.

The whole question becomes necessarily complicated, and failure is certain. But they are urged on by failures till they entirely lose sight of what is due from them to the people of the country. The future of the country depends pre-eminently upon harmonious co-operation between Hindus and Muhammadans. You cannot get rid of either the one or the other. The two have got to settle down and stay together in this land, and therefore they must work together. All hopes of a common nationality and all the advantages of Self-Government that come in with common nationality are idle dreams to our people, and therefore public workers must never lose sight of them that they owe a duty to the future of their country, and that they should do their best not to emphasise these differences but to compose them as far as possible. If at times passions are so roused that you are unable to do anything helpful and if you can do nothing to compose these differences, hold your peace; in any case do not say anything or do not do anything that will embitter

the situation any further. A recognition of this essential duty is necessary before our public life really gathers that strength which it is necessary that it should acquire. Torn among ourselves, we cannot build up any strength and we cannot bring any strength to bear upon the Government and we are unable to discharge our duties in the nurseries of Self-Government, and the whole thing will be in the feeble and chaotic state in which we shall content to be as we are to-day. These are the responsibilities of public workers.

There are one or two other things that I want to mention. That is specially in connection with the reforms that have been recently granted. There is no doubt whatsoever that those who understand public affairs will at one recognise that these reforms have given great opportunities for the creation and for the building up of public opinion in this country, in nothing else. What we say in the Councils may or may not affect the rulers. I know it does affect the rulers and that very considerably. As a matter of fact, I found in days even before the reforms came what we said used to have effect and influence upon the rulers, and what we say now naturally carries much more weight, not only because our numbers are larger but because there are wider powers conferred upon these Councils than they possessed before. You must deal with the ruling race as it is; it is a hard-headed race; no mere appeal to sentiment will go a long way with that race. What is necessary is a careful and deep study of public questions. Our public men have begun to acquire such a study. But you cannot take up that study when for the first time you go into the Council. Many of our men who are following their ordinary professional work in their life come forward and get themselves elected to the

Council, and then they take up that study of public questions. Mind you, I find no fault with them, because in the past there has been no public life. But this must now cease. Only those who are acquainted with public question and deal with them with that weight and dignity which is necessary in the Councils should be sent to the Councils hereafter. If they know their subjects well, what they say will go much further with the ruling race than what they may say on mere sentiments. If public men are to study public questions, then the responsibility rests with the senior workers of this country to provide facilities to younger men for studying public questions. They are no such facilities anywhere at the present moment. Unless your younger men take up the study of public questions by the time they come to play a leading part in public affairs, it will not be possible for them to acquire that firm acquaintance with public questions that is desirable.

Therefore, it is a new duty which our public men have to recognise if they want to do their work properly in Councils, in local bodies, even in the press. Public questions must be studied much more carefully and deeply than they have been in the past. Facilities must be provided for younger men in order that they may take up the study of public questions as soon as they can. Gentlemen, I have really spoken more than I intended, and I think it is time that I should bring my remarks to a close.

I have dealt with the difficulties of our public life, as we see them, and I have also mentioned briefly the extraordinary difficulties that lie in our path. In fact, these difficulties are greater than confront any other people on the face of the earth. I have pointed out to you also special responsibilities that rest upon our

workers, firstly, as the result of the abnormal situation of the country, as a result of temporary and existing causes. Now I will say one word in conclusion and then I will bring my remarks to a close. I have just now pointed out that our difficulties are much more formidable than those of any other people. Our path is not on level ground, it is uphill and there is every discouragement in our path. We have got to face this, we should not be cast down and depressed by constant failures in our attempts. I have more than once said in other places and I think I may repeat it here that we have to realise that in our present state we can do work to our country as much by failures as by successes. (Cheers.) We cannot do more than what is possible in the existing circumstance, and we are answerable to God and man, if we do not do all that is possible.

But one requirement of the situation above all others is this. That a sufficient number among us should come forward and take up the work of public life for its own sake exclusively. You remember that the expression public service has been used in the past to represent the Government service. (Laughter.) A man in public service means usually a man who is an official. All that has to alter for our people now. The meaning of public service now for our people should be voluntary service in the interests of our fellow-beings. Government service should be dethroned from the place which it has held in our hearts all these years, and the real service shall be installed in its place and this is possible only if a sufficient number of educated young men come forward to take up the work of the country in the spirit in which it ought to be taken up. Nowhere else are public affairs left exclusively to men whose whole time is nearly taken up with professional

avocation. What will you think of a proprietor who employs a Manager who spends the whole of his time in gardening and goes only in the evening to the Factory and gives a few orders, or again what will you think of the Manager of a Press who does other work during the day and turns off to the Press only in the evenings? There is no business in that kind of thing. We have now got to make a business of our public life, we have now got to make a business of our public service. Young men must come forward to take up a public service for its own sake excepting beyond one's own satisfaction and nothing less than a proper and efficient discharge of the service. This is the supreme requirement of the situation. I do not want to be unjust to those who are doing their best amidst difficulties. The earlier generations have done valuable work by clearing the ground. They have laid the foundation on which we should build the superstructure. The work of the coming generations is this work of superstructure, and this work is really not possible unless sufficient number among us come forward to take up public life for its own aske. Look at the Members of the House of Commons. Many of them are men of means, but some of them are not men of means, and yet they exist solely and simply for public work. Surely there are enough numbers among our educated men who possess means of their own. There are many among us who are well provided for by industrious parents who have laid by a store for them. (Laughter.) Many of the parents have spent the whole of their life-time either in Government service or in professional work, and they have well provided for their sons. There is no reason why these young men should allow their sense of filial duty so far as to make them walk exactly in the footsteps of

their parents. (Laughter.) They may now claim to judge for themselves as to how best they will utilise the education they receive and how best they will serve the country which requires their service.

To the young men of means, I say this and I shall continue to say it while there is breath in me. Go and take up the work of the country; take up public service in the sense in which I have described for its own sake; think of the vast country that we have; think of the care that has been bestowed upon it; think of the position which the human beings of this country are capable of and think of the works that have been done to the country. This is a vast work, this a vast mountain which requires vast force to move it, and this cannot be supplied by a few men working here and there, or by a large number working in spare odd hours. Therefore, a great special responsibility rests on young men of means to come forward and take up the work of the country in that spirit of devotion which the country has a right to demand at their hands. If they do all that, I have no misgivings about the future. I have enough faith in our own race, in the intelligence, in the capacity of our race. I have enough faith in its intelligence and capacity to feel that a great destiny is in store for us. Everything that I see around me is working towards it; so that this destiny of ours may be fulfilled and the only way to secure it is that the young men of this country have got to be true to themselves. If they do this, all else will come in its own time, and so we shall discharge that duty which we owe to ourselves out of our very self-respect and so shall we discharge that duty which we owe to those who have to come afterwards and we shall have done that duty which we owe to our ancient land which has given us birth and which all of us love so well. (Cheers.)

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